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Melody

George F. O'Connell



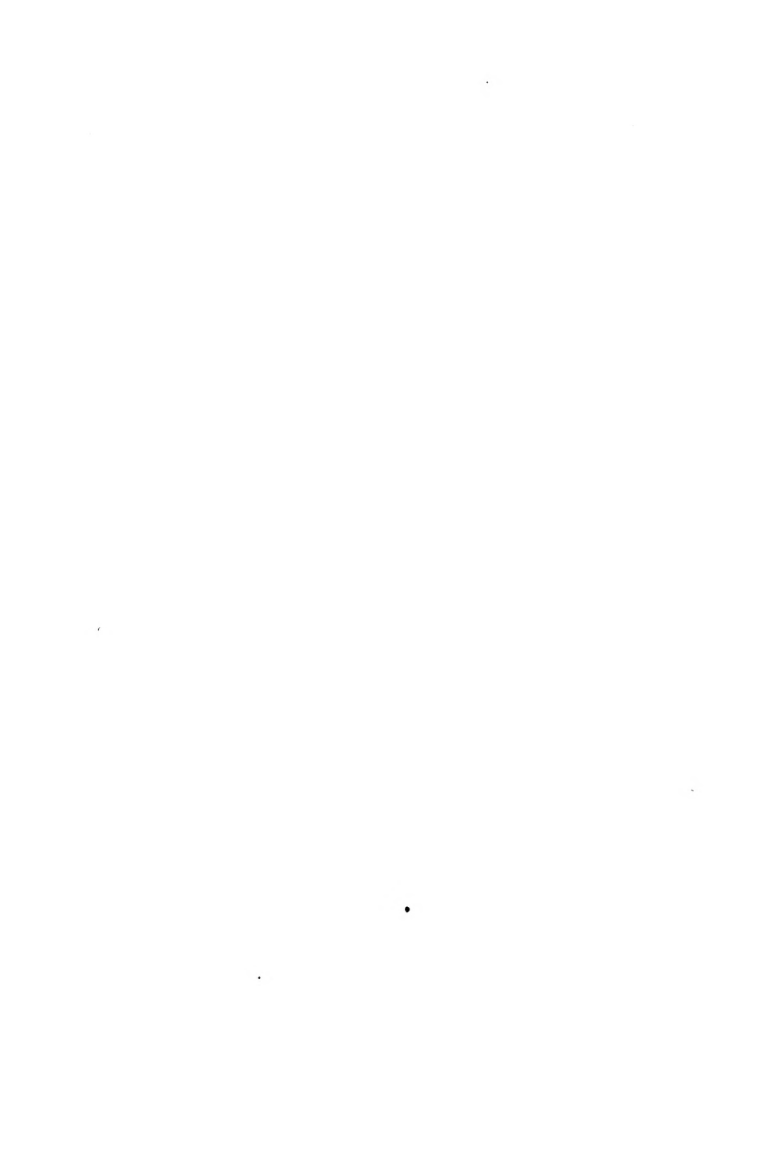


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MELODY

MELODY

BY

GEORGE F. O'CONNELL



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TO THE
DEARLY CHERISHED MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

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MELODY

RETROSPECTION

To My Mother

The passing years have left untouched
My memory's sacred thrill,
Thy voice's tone—thine eyes' soft gaze,
That cause mine own to fill,
Across my vision flash, undimmed
By death's oblivion still.

To-day upon my soul descends the vital part of
 thee—
The thing immortal that is surging on,
And throbs in me,
And makes me feel how wondrous is our love's
 great unity.

MELODY

To Mme. Julia Claussen

Bid me to sing—that some poor wounded soul

May live awhile forgetful of its pain.

Bid me to sing—mayhap for one to lift the veil

Of some sweet yesterday again.

Bid me to sing—who knows a soaring meadow-
lark

May sing an answer to my lay.

Bid me to sing—dear God, that he who wanders
far

May hear and find again his way.

TO THE SEA

To Adelaide Whytal

Down by the sea, near the water's edge,
Where the sands are soft and gray,
A fair-haired lad with a tiny ship
Is lost in his boyish play.
And only the cry of a mother gull
And the ringing laugh of a child
And the crooning song of the restless deep
Break on this stillness mild.

Down by the sea, near the water's edge,
A big ship came one day,
And a sailor lad kissed an aged brow—
And the big ship sailed away.
The sudden boom of a battle gun,
The flight of a frightened bird,
A murmured prayer on two trembling lips—
But never a sob was heard.

Down by the sea, near the water's edge,
A lonely woman stands
With an anchor white, on a blue tattered rag,

TO THE SEA

Clasped in her trembling hands.
But deep in her mother's heart lives a pride,
For a hero's blood has been shed;
She smiles through her tears, for the Victor's flag
Was borne by her noble dead!

MEMORIES

To Mina C. Pfirshing

In the early flush of the sunset sky
A song of a thrush in a tree close by
Brought a message of hope for a life to be—
This song of a thrush in a maple tree.

In the twilight dim of that evening still
The mournful call of a whippoorwill
Brought a tear-dimmed face of a mother mild
To the aching heart of a lonely child.

In the midnight hush of the starlight pale
The pleading tones of a nightingale
Came throbbing in rapturous ecstasy,
'Til it wakened an olden love in me.

But ah! in the dawn, on the dewy ground,
It was only a mocking-bird I found,
Whose little heart broke with songs not his own
As he sang of a love that he once had known.

YOUR SONG

To Carrie Jacobs Bond

Sing to me, darlin', a bit of a song,
As I lie in the moonlight anear you.
There's a rift in my heart and a hurt in my soul,
And sure 'twill be soothin' to hear you.
For oh, 'tis the wondrous voice that you own
So wistful and soft to my hearin'.
What memories I have, as I list to its lilts,
Of faces and things so endearin'.

There's times when your note has the call of a lark,
And again, I can hear the sweet linnet;
But always, dear—always—it leaps to my heart
For the tear and the wail that there's in it.
So sing to me, dearest, a lone little chant,
To ease me and still my poor sighin'—
For 'tis only your song that can rest me to-night,
As here in the moonlight I'm lyin'.

DESERTED

To Mrs. May Ramsdell

The old house stands deserted and forsaken,
Amid the dreams that yesterday were true;
There is no voice can call it to awaken,
For they are gone—who once its shelter knew.

The garden too is overgrown with wild things.
This barren heap was once a pansy bed.
The clustered grape—the rose vine—and the mild
things
That grew in sweet profusion—now are dead.

Bethink you! This was once a hallowed bower
Where love's own mystic voice in whispers
spoke.
This crumbling sundial marked the trembling hour
When two lives parted with a silent hope.

How many autumn twilights long have vanished
Since from this garden gazed an aged face,
Whose hope for his return time never banished,
Whose tear-worn eyes his soldier form would
trace.

THE SWAN

To Kathleen

A lonely swan drifts down the tranquil lake,
A willow tree is moaning on the shore;
I know the silent thing is grieving for its mate,
The willow sobs for springs that are no more.

A L A M E N T

To Eleanor Hymer

I am waitin' here beside the road 'til you be
passin' by,
And ask the roguish likes of you to give the
reason why
A poor young gossoon like myself should pine in
sad despair
And you be so unnoticin' and seemin' not to care.

Arrah, Delia Doolin, quit your foolin' an' leave
off your teasin' ways—
Faith, me nights you're overrulin' an' you're
damagin' my days;
I'm so worried and uncivil—you're to blame, you
little divil,
Sure you have me killed entirely—Delia darlin'
be my own!

There's not a lad about the place can love you
more than I,
And 'tis envious they all will be to see us steppin'
by.

A LAMENT

And you'll be leanin' on my arm enjoyin' the
hilarity

And I'll be smilin' down upon the beauteous Mrs.
Flaherty.

Arrah, Delia Doolin, quit your foolin' an' leave
off your teasin' ways—

Faith, me nights you're overrulin' an' you're
damagin' my days;

I'm so worried and uncivil—you're to blame, you
little divil,

Sure you have me killed entirely—Delia darlin'
be my own!

A GYPSY SLUMBER SONG

To Mrs. Eugene Malloy

Little lad of a wandering tribe sleeping upon my
breast

I clasp thy limbs of dusky brown, and watch thee
through thy rest.

The silver charm about thy neck shines in the
campfire's light,

And thy fate's star is hanging low to bless thy
future's flight.

Sleep, my babe, for I love thee—my little lad of
Romany.

Little king of the dusty road, slumber till break-
ing dawn

When the catbird's call will waken us, after the
night is gone;

Then we'll hie once more through the woodland
paths

And cross the meadow's streams, and pitch our
tent when evening comes

And sing to dreams you again, to dreams.

Sleep, my child, for I'm watching thee—my little
lad of Romany.

DEDICATION

To Myrtle Reed

Thy silver pen lies tarnished with its rust,
And thou that once did wield its mystic themes
Hast long since found thy sleep 'mid nature's
claiming dust,
And left us but these pages of thy dreams.

And yet within this book wherein thy hand did
trace
The love tales and romance, so sweetly told,
Doth seem to live again thy well-remembered
face,
And thy spirit held a captive in its fold.

THE VICTOR

To Lieut. Morgan B. McDermott

Now take thy rest, for thou art glorious sublime—
Thou valiant youth victorious, entombed in foreign clime.

A star of gold is hung for thee upon a flag flown high,

A brighter one gleams forth to-night in God's remembering sky.

Rest thou in peace, thou fearless one and brave,
Thy radiant soul is glorified, thy blood has freed the slave;

The trumpet sounds thy welcome call beneath the sacred dome,

And Christ Himself goes forth to lead His child,
His soldier, home!

Now take thy rest.

LA MADONNA DEL AZURA

To My Mother

The sky is but reflected light
From thy soft mantle fair,
The ocean's blue God made for you;
Because that hue you wear;
The violet and forget-me-not,
The bird with azure wing,
Are little thoughts to thee on earth
That grow and bloom and sing.

DEVOTION

To Mrs. Sarah Fahy

Once when my heart was aching
 After a soul that had fled,
Once when life's bonds seemed breaking
 And future hopes lay dead,
I came to you in that valley—
 You were awaiting me there.
Your faith touched mine in its rally,
 Your smile awakened my prayer.
I hold you close in affection
 Just for the cheer of that day.
Always this sweet recollection—
 Your love illumined my way.

YEARNING

To Nelle K. Browning

Laddie, come play me a wee bonny strain
And carry me home in the gloamin';
Take up thy pipes, and I'll follow thee there
And ne'er leave again to gae roamin'.

For Laddie, it's fair round my cot o'er there,
With the heather and brier rose bloomin';
But the hearts that are bidin' my comin' again
Take the pain frae these long years of gloamin'.

But ah! Laddie dear, I've forgotten I'm auld
And the years that hae come and hae flown;
I'd nae find a thing but a hearthstone grown
cauld,
Nae a face nor a voice that I've known.

THE LILY

To Rev. Thomas F. Burke, C.S.P.

When Christ was nearing Calvary's mount,
To die for men that day,
One last sad tear fell from His cheek
And on the earth it lay.
On Easter morn on that same place,
Lest some rude tread might sear,
A lily bloomed, and in her cup
She held that little tear.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE

To Maude Burnham

All day there glowed the dull November sky.
The chilly winds from off the inland lake,
Have swept the fallen leaves in helpless drifts
to die,
And chant a solemn dirge far out where billows
break.

Some grey geese scream above me as they fly
To some fair land where summer's fragrance
fills,
Far off I hear the vibrant dismal cry,
Of some wild thing affrighted in the hills.

Ere long the bitter frosts, then winter's snowy
blight.
No semblance then of golden August days,
Thus must I bide alone amid my saddened plight,
And call unanswered down the muted ways.

IN AN OLD GARDEN

To D. M. O'Connell

A golden sunset fading into red,
A humming-bird above a yellow tulip bed,
A little fountain weeping near a rose-hung wall,
A cricket's evening song, a ring-dove's vesper
call—

'Tis twilight there.

A May moon glimmering through blossoming
apple trees,
A honeysuckle swinging her censer on the breeze,
A tired fawn sleeping near a star-reflected lake,
The locust's hum, a loon's cry from the brake—
'Tis nighttime there.

TO - DAY

To Orrin Johnson

Tell thou to-day love's word that trembles on thy
speech

Lest passing time decree it be not told;
Stretch forth thy hand to me while mine has
power to reach—

To-morrow's light may find it strangely cold.

And oh, remember, dear, when my poor rest is
won

I cannot know thy bitterness and pain;
But I can clasp thy rose ere this sweet day is
done

And hear thee say my heart breaks not in vain.

A B S E N C E

To Grace Armstrong

Let not my memory fade when I have gone from
thee,

But keep me still enfolded in thy heart.

At sunrise or at star shine, I care not when it be,
If thou wilt think of me, where'er thou art.

Let some belovéd book, or song we used to sing,
Recall me when the day begins to wane.

A lily pond—a broken road—a violet-crested
spring,

Or e'en a bluebird's note may hold my name.

THE SHADOW

To S. M. C.

The Christ Child stands with outstretched arms
To greet the rising sun,
And near a tree His mother rests
To guard her little One.
He looks afar into the East
Where clouds hang low like masts,
But her sad gaze falls on the cross
His slender shadow casts.

THE PENITENT

To J. E. R.

Before a chapel altar ere day was almost spent
There knelt within its shadow a humble penitent
The place was long deserted, a single taper
 burned
And shed its beams of softness upon her face
 upturned.
There were no sighs of anguish, there were no
 sobs of pain,
There were no cries of hopelessness for days long
 lived in vain;
But there were tears, aye, countless tears, that
 stained the hollow cheek
And bore a contrite message that words could
 never speak,
And on a little crucifix held firm in her embrace,
Like Magdalen, she looks upon her gentle Mas-
 ter's face.

OLD FRIEND OF MINE

To Leo G. Dwan

Take my hand and clasp it tight
And promise me that through life's fight
We'll steadfast stand in loyal might,
Dear friend of mine—old friend of mine.

Look on me well before we part
And read the friendship in my heart
And feel my quickened pulses start,
Dear friend of mine—old friend of mine.

Perhaps we'll meet some moonlit night
On some far desert plain or height
Our comradeship to reunite,
Dear friend of mine—old friend of mine.

But if our hopes be only vain
And on death's scroll be writ my name
Live on, my soul will still remain,
Dear friend of mine—old friend of mine.

A RHAPSODY

To Julia ReBeil

Ofttimes within my soul there throbs a joy un-
spoken

That feeble words of mine seem lost to sing;

'Tis then I come to thee and clasp thy chords
unbroken,

And lo! what raptures sweet thy keys resound-
ing bring.

MAVOURNEEN

To Mary Marren

Mary Mavourneen, I'm missin' your face
And all the dear ways that you had,
And I'm mindin' the day that you came to the
place
When I was a bit of a lad.

Those long years of love and tenderest care
You gave me, my Mary Machree,
Will live in a heart that you helped to make
fair—
A heart that beats fondly for thee.

Mary Mavourneen, 'tis sweet is your rest
Up with God's angels afar,
But I know that your soul from that Isle of the
Blessed
Will shine in my West like a star.

THE FIREFLY

To Lilian Tucker

A little troubadour of night
Paused to kiss a rose of white
And in the light when dawning came
Her petals glowed with crimson flame.

MY TRUST

To Rev. P. J. O'Callaghan, C.S.P.

What though my name be held in earthly praise,
And fame's bright star emblazon all my ways;
What though my barge drift homeward jewel
 heaped,
And victory's mount by bleeding feet be reached;
What though my days by golden suns be blessed,
And crescent moons loom silvery in my West—
If at the close of twilight's peaceful time
Your weary hands come not, dear friend, to rest
 in mine.

What though my paths are oftentimes lone and
 drear,
And sorrow's cry the only sound I hear;
What though fate's waves in anger lash my bark,
And lights of hope gleam faintly in the dark;
What though the friends I've trusted most—
 forget,
And cherished dreams by failure are beset—
If I can only come to you when these are past
Naught else will matter then—and I'll know peace
 at last.

MIO CARISSIMO

To Margaret B.

Oh Little Han', Oh Sweeta Han',
Oh Han' of my bambin',
You hol' my heart in eet so tight
Like nothing I have seen.
Oh Little Face so softa and white
Dat I am love to kiss
If I was make a lady queen
I would not geeve for dis.

Oh Littla Han', Oh Sweeta Han',
Oh Han' of my bambin',
You no stay here wid me no more
But go away it seem.
But many time when night is come
I sleep to have kind dream
And feel again to touch my cheek
De han' of my bambin'.

THE SONG MAKER

To Gertrude Ross

You weave the threads of life's sweet harmonies
Into a tapestry of golden song.

You give the soul of melody sublime
To poet's verse, that makes its tones prolong.

How great that Art!

How wondrous seems your pen!

That you can give creation to a thing
That holds the very hearts and souls of men!

LA NOCHE d'ESPANA

To Rita Olcott

Bright on the night shines la lunita
Soft as the eyes of some fair señorita—
Here in the courtyard a mandolinita
Is sounding its music
For light feet to dance.

Pablo is singing to his noviecita
Pledging his love 'neath a bright estrellita
While she waves her fan like a gay coquetita
And smiles on her lover
His soul to entrance.

AN IRISH TOAST

To Kate Condon

Here's to the eyes of you—Irish and blue—
Here's to the smile of you—gentle and true—
Here's to the laughter and song in your heart—
Here's to the tears of affection that start—
Here's to you, Kate,
Blessed be your fate
Early and late
'Tis—God love you.

SWEET LAVENDER

To Lillian Herbert

A slender orchid blooming,
And near a lilac tree
A pretty maid in lavender
Is singing happily.
And in her lap lie violets,
But in her hand I see
She holds—all bound in lavender—
This foolish heart of me.

A SOUTHERN PLEA

To Mildred and Walter

See dat moon up in de sky,
Honey, will you lub me?
If you don' I shore will die,
Honey, will you lub me?
Let my han' 'round yours twine
Jes' like some sweet glory vine.
See dese flashin' eyes of mine,
Honey, will you lub me?

'Taint no use to hide yo' face,
Honey, will you lub me?
Lubin' me aint no disgrace,
Honey, will you lub me?
See me down here on my knee
Jes' a-pourin' out my plea
Is you 'templatin' marryin' me?
Honey, will you lub me?

CHÈRE ANTOINETTE

To Josephine Graff

Where have you go, my Antoinette?
Sometime I tink you have forget
And maybe one petite coquette—
I hope not yet
Ma chère 'Toinette.

But you have take one grand voyage
And make me feel so disparage
That sight of you will be mirage—
I hope not yet
Charmant 'Toinette.

Voilà! I see you come encore
I trow une baiser from de door—
Oh, jolie fille, don't go some more—
I love you yet.
Have you regret?
I hope not yet
Mon ange 'Toinette.

FRIENDSHIP

To Bert O. Miller

If deep within the confines of your soul
You hold a heart that melts with yours into a
 perfect whole,
If through your very being leaps that ecstatic
 fire
That only sacred friendship can kindle and in-
 spire;
If you can feel the ever pressing of a hand
And hear ofttimes a murmured prayer,
Though in some distant, sunless land,
Give thanks! For God has sanctified your worth
And given you, e'en now, a glimpse of paradise
 on earth.

ROSEMARY

FOR REMEMBRANCE

To Hilda Spong

Will you remember me—now that we've parted—
And you turn again to the road that leads
home,
While I am gazing, lone and sick-hearted,
Watching you fade from me into the gloam.

Will you recall me, at some twilight's ending,
As you seek again those green hills that we
knew,
While from the distance my cold lips are sending
Life's last sweet message, my love-prayer, to
you.

SANCTIFIED

To Mrs. P. J. Barrett

Shed thou no tears beside my vine-clad tomb,
Nor call my name, nor bid me to return,
For I was weary, and Life's hand of gloom
Holds me no more; within its fragile urn
Two flaming lamps I had to light my way:
One, mother-love; the other, glowing prayer.
Cease then to mourn, for in this endless day
My soul has found a God most wondrous fair.

AT MUSIC'S SHRINE

To Edna Peterson

Thy gentle fingers touch the snowy keys,
As some fair goddess weaves her golden lute.
And melody's caressing charms ascend—
I listen—with enraptured senses—mute.
For Thou, Sweet Lady, with this magic gift,
That is thine own in such a goodly part,
Hast power to lift my soul beyond life's sting,
And keep love's sacred trust within my heart.

LOVE WATCHES

To My Father

Why do you seek that cold grey rock, out where
the waves are meeting?

Sure 'twill break your heart, poor weary child,
to list to their weary beating.

Your little world of yesterday lies crushed, aroon,
and dying—

Oh lamb of my soul, come home to my arms, for
'tis I can hear your crying.

Let me press your head 'gainst my throbbing
breast and kiss each tear that's falling,

And hear again of your ship that sailed too far
from the heed of your calling.

And when your eyes of softest blue are closed by
the croon of my singing,

I'll watch by the side of you all the night through,
God knows what the morn will be bringing.

MOTHERHOOD

To Mazie

Each child of thine to thee is bound by some
belovèd charm,

And as the oak has need of branch and bough
So hast thou want of them that nestled once upon
thine arm,

For in their love is thy blessed haven now.

Sweet Motherhood! Divinest gift of all that
God can give!

Thou art the thing supreme of all the race.

From thee does man seek first his heritage to live;
From thee doth come his courage, strength,
and grace.

M A M M Y

To Duke F.....

Dere's jes' one light dat gives de world de sun-
shine

An' jes' one vast expandin' sky of blue,
Dere's jes' one moon a-beamin' in de nighttime
An' jes' one mammy in de world like you.

Dere's jes' one heart dat always holds my sorrow
An' jes' one soul dat always takes my hand,
Dere's jes' one voice dat cheers me for de mor-
row,

I loves you, honey, doan you understand?

AFTERWARDS

To Ethel B. Reeves

After the night's weary watching,
After the longing and pain,
Daybreak at last on the skyline,
And hope in my soul once again.

After life's pitiless journey,
After the heartbreaks and tears,
Rest in the grey ebbing twilight,
Sleep and God's peace for all fears.

REQUIESCAT

To My Mother

Sweet Crucified, have mercy on her soul!
And grant to her the gaining of that eternal goal
Wherein Thy Sacred Kingdom all worship and
 adore
Thee, Sovereign Prince of Love, now and ever-
 more.

Look down on me and see my tears to-day!
And teach me, gentle Savior, more fervently to
 pray
For her whom I have loved and lost, but yet a
 little while.
But through Thy tender mercies, again I'll see
 that smile,
And feel once more her presence, and clasp that
 loving hand
When I have come to Thee, Dear Christ, into
 Thy promised land.

Oh Mother Mary, Blessed Lady of the Skies!
Give heed and tender comfort unto my griefs and
 sighs,

REQUIESCAT

And take beneath the mantle of thy maternal
grace

This mother love of mine, to bring more closely
to His face.

Sweet Crucified, have mercy on her soul!

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